

TRANSITIONAL WORDS & PHRASES: connecting sentences & ideas

Transitions help you to create *cohesion* in a piece of writing. There are three main things to remember when using transitions and adding them to your essays and paragraphs. First, choose the transition word or phrase that is most logical; in other words, choose the word or phrase that represents and communicates the correct relationship between the sentences. Second, remember to place your transitions in strategic and logical spots—places where your reader may need a little help seeing connections between sentences and/or ideas. And lastly, use a variety of transitions; we often get “stuck” using the same few transition words or phrases over and over when there are a lot more options available to us. Readers like variety, so use a variety of transitional words and phrases to connect ideas for them. Below is a table listing transitional words and phrases and the relationships they express. Use this table and the rest of this handout as a reference to help you complete the homework worksheet as well as choose the best transitions when revising, editing, and finalizing your writing assignments.

Category/Type of Relationship	Transitional Words & Phrases
Addition	also, again, as well as, besides, coupled with, furthermore, in addition, likewise, moreover, similarly
Consequence	accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, so then, subsequently, therefore, thus, thereupon, wherefore
Generalizing	as a rule, as usual, for the most part, generally, generally speaking, ordinarily, usually
Exemplifying	chiefly, especially, for instance, in particular, markedly, namely, particularly, including, specifically, such as, above all else
Illustration	for example, for instance, for one thing, as an illustration, illustrated with, illustrated ads, as an example, in this case
Emphasis	above all, chiefly, with attention to, especially, particularly, singularly
Similarity	comparatively, coupled with, correspondingly, identically, likewise, similar, moreover, together with
Exception	aside from, barring, except, excepting, excluding, exclusive of, other than, outside of
Restatement	in essence, in other words, namely, that is, that is to say, in short, in brief, to put it differently
Contrast & Comparison	by contrast, by the same token, conversely, instead, likewise, on one hand, on the other hand, on the contrary, rather, similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless, in contrast
Sequence	at first, first of all, to begin with, in the first place, at the same time, for now, for the time being, the next step, in time, later on, meanwhile, next, then, soon, in the meantime, later, while, earlier, simultaneously, afterward, in conclusion, with this in mind
Summarizing	after all, all in all, all things considered, briefly, by and large, in any case, in any event, in brief, in conclusion, on the whole, in short, in summary, in the final analysis, in the long run, on balance, to sum up, to summarize, finally
Diversion	by the way, incidentally
Direction	here, there, over there, beyond, behind, nearly, opposite, under, above, to the left, to the right, in the distance

EXAMPLES: choosing the right transition

Comparison/Contrast

- a. Their gardens both looked beautiful. His was the product of intensive effort; conversely, hers was the product of a low maintenance approach.
- b. His garden looked beautiful after many hours of work. By contrast, his neighbor's garden looked equally beautiful, though she practiced a low maintenance approach.

Consequence

- a. She was preparing to clean the chair and subsequently realized she had no soap.
- b. She was cleaning the chair with a powerful solution. As a result, the chair was cleaner than it had ever been.

Direction

- a. They grew impatient waiting for his arrival while in the distance they didn't see him coming.
- b. The team was practicing for their big game that was to take place the next day. Behind the stands, however, the scout was watching their every move.

Emphasis/Exemplification

- a. The sixth grade class was reading 19th century children's literature, particularly *American Letter to My Young Cousin*.
- b. The class was challenged to research classic works on the strategies of war. Above all else, they were directed to read *The Art of War*.

Exception

- a. The community committee members serve without pay exclusive of the chairman, who is considered an employee.
- b. The author seemed to be describing everything that happened that day in my early childhood. Aside from the location, everything she wrote about was the strangely familiar.

Generalizing

- a. Even though we live and work in the city, as a rule we try to get away every other weekend.
- b. All of our student committees should be as representative as possible of each category of MSU students. Ordinarily, each committee does not have less than four or more than eight members and each must meet the requirements of membership.

Illustration

- a. The most recent edition of the book is more artistic, illustrated with many lovely drawings of nature.
- b. Her friends were discussing how the wedding dress looked on her; for one thing, the dress was way too long.

Restatement

- a. My bed is my favorite place to be, or, to put it differently, I love to sleep!
- b. A glider is an unpowered aircraft that uses air currents to ascend and descend. In essence, a glider is a small airplane without an engine.

Sequence

- a. I will draft a contract simultaneously with filling out important forms and completing the necessary paperwork.
- b. The negotiations will begin next week. In the meantime, informal discussions will take place between leaders.

Similarity

- a. We discussed computer security problems, coupled with a debate about fixing our network protection issues.
- b. The teacher announced that the paper was due at the end of the week; correspondingly, Jenna completed her final draft by Thursday evening so she was ready to hand in her work on time.

Summarizing

- a. "At least we can help make the world safe for diversity, for in the final analysis our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet" (President John F. Kennedy, 1963).
- b. The video game has many interesting graphics and the pace is set well with the music. On the whole, I would recommend it to my friends.

EXERCISE 1: read the following paragraph and choose the correct transitions.

A microwave is a form of energy that travels in high frequency waves. (Although/In short) we cannot see microwaves, we can easily observe how they affect objects. (On the other hand/For instance) microwaves penetrate food in microwave ovens. (As a result/In addition), the food is cooked. Microwaves are used in both radar and telecommunications (as well/however). (To summarize,/Yet) microwaves are a part of modern life.

EXERCISE 2: connect the following ideas by writing one or two sentences for each, being sure to use transitions.

a) There are more and more cars producing exhaust. Acid rain is increasing.

b) Solids are matter. Liquids and gasses are matter.

c) Dogs, wolves, and foxes are canines. Humans are not canines.

d) Digital watches, video cameras, fax machines, and laptop computers are electronics. Electronics are part of our daily lives.